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Second Edition, Revised, with Supplement
AMERICAN TROOPS
AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE IN INDIA
June 25, 1942

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By *G. A. Barker*

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Mass Civil Disobedience in India.

Twice Gandhi has led mass civil disobedience movements in India, and once in South Africa, where he first devised the method. The two campaigns in India were in 1920-22 and 1930-32. The purpose of mass civil disobedience is to make a disliked administration inoperable, and at the same time to do so without the use of violence, which in Gandhi's opinion is always reprehensible and productive of evil results. The method is also the natural one, as Gandhi has said, for a weak and unarmed populace, like India's, which by law for over 60 years has been prohibited from owning firearms. A mass civil disobedience campaign, properly conducted, would not only destroy a hated rulership but would also keep public sympathy with the resisters. These last, who themselves would have abjured violence, might become the victims of the Government's violence, and the Government then would receive general public opprobrium for striking those who did not strike back.

In 1920, after various political disturbances, Gandhi induced the Indian National Congress to adopt a program of non-cooperation with the Government, including surrender of all government titles and nomination to local bodies, boycott of

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government functions, boycott of government schools, colleges and courts, refusal to stand as candidates for elections. The program was executed under the direction of well disciplined Congress workers, who got large masses of the people behind it. Boycott of British manufactured goods accompanied the non-cooperation. The program was surprisingly successful, and many government activities were being impeded. Though Gandhi had strictly forbidden violence, the British in India feared it, and were prepared to fight for their hold. They had set up assembly points for the British civilian population, and in many places had laid plans for meeting an emergency. Violence did at last break out, particularly at Chauri Chaura in February 1922, when 21 policemen and village watchmen were killed. But, when it did, Gandhi, shocked, called off the program, and the movement came to an end.

The second mass civil disobedience came in 1930, after the appointment (1927) and work of the Simon Commission. Many disorders had accompanied the visit of that Commission to India. The nationalists and the British could not agree and Congress finally decided on civil disobedience. The issue on which the campaign was opened was the salt tax, and Gandhi led a dramatic march to the sea to make untaxed salt contrary to government regulations. Boycott of British goods followed, especially of cotton goods. The country had to be governed by executive

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ordinances, and by June 1932, political convictions were almost 50,000 in number. Violence had broken out, and the police and soldiery had been used in connection with it. The campaign came to an end in 1932, but again only after alarming the British lest their hold be broken.

Possibility of a New Mass Civil Disobedience Campaign.

When the Cripps Mission failed, Indian politics were thrown into a state of confusion greater than any since the war broke out in 1939. All parties despaired of any satisfactory settlement with Britain, while the British Government stated through Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India, that it had done all it could and saw no way to make a further effort. Among the leaders of the Indian National Congress, Nehru and Rajagopalachariar wished to use all India's energies to support armed opposition to a Japanese invasion. These two, however, did not prevail with the Congress Working Committee, which inclined instead to Mr. Gandhi. His program was to oppose Japan by non-violent resistance, while continuing to insist that Britain recognize India's independence. The Committee accepted this plan. Nehru, though opposed to it, accepted it, evidently in the interest of party solidarity; but Rajagopalachariar bolted and seems to have taken with him the Madras Congress party, of which he is the leader.

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Gandhi has been giving indications that he considers it necessary to pursue simultaneously the two aims of beating back the Japanese and unloosening the British grip on India. He wishes to use mass civil disobedience as the weapon for both ends. The campaign, as he seems to be planning it, is to start against the British. News of this intention first came to our State Department in letters which Mr. Nehru wrote to Mr. Louis Johnson after his return from India. These letters and a news story in our papers of June 11 indicate that Nehru had arrived at some sort of understanding with Gandhi concerning the nature of the campaign. The implication was that it would be mass civil disobedience, though it was not so stated. Further news stories of June 16 and 17 imply that, unless India's independence is recognized, Gandhi will call for mass civil disobedience; but, if that independence is recognized, he will approve of the presence of British and American troops in India to resist Japan, and will then encourage Indians to unite in supporting the troops.

Dispatches to the State Department, dated New Delhi, June 17 and 20, make it seem that he means to launch this movement about July 15 with "strikes", probably hartals (general boycott with closing of shops). According to another State Department dispatch (New Delhi, June 16), Gandhi is said to have stated

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that the railway will be allowed to function, so as not to embarrass the conduct of the war. The State Department's representative adds that the peasants will gleefully support civil disobedience and the strikes, but industrial workers will not be enthusiastic.

The New York Times of June 23 has a dispatch from London, dated June 20, quoting an article by Gandhi in his weekly paper, Harijan, reaffirming his stand that British authority in India must end, irrespective of the wishes of the various political parties, but stating his willingness to tolerate the presence of their troops to prevent Japanese occupation. "That prevention," he adds, "is a common cause between them and us. It may also be necessary for the sake of China."

Possibly Gandhi is now uncertain whether he should call for mass civil disobedience. He may be influenced by the Japanese threat; he may also be finding opposition among prominent members of Congress, which would impair the success of a campaign. Possibly he also hopes that the British will make an unequivocal and satisfactory promise about India's political freedom.

To what extent Gandhi's plans will be altered by the British disaster in Libya is not yet indicated. Previous British misfortunes, such as the loss of Singapore and Burma,

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have not driven Indians to closer association with Britain, but have confirmed the Indians in their opinions, first, that Britain is now too weak to hold India if any serious effort is made to achieve independence; and, second, that India's safety must lie increasingly in the hands of Indians themselves. Gandhi may, therefore, find renewed support for his plan of mass civil disobedience.

Character of a New Mass Civil Disobedience Movement.

A New mass civil disobedience campaign under Congress leadership would be likely to have the following features: boycott of courts, government aided schools, all the government services; boycott and picketing of shops selling British-made goods. If his campaign were generally adopted, there would be a national confusion, crippling the war in the field, and facilitating Japanese aggression. He might conceivably produce disaffection in the army. All this would be favorable to a Japanese attack.

The Muslims might feel that Britain could no longer assist them against the Hindus, and they might endeavor to establish their own position. If the Near East turns against Britain, as it might now, the Indian Muslims might be influenced to the same end.

Though Gandhi speaks for non-violence, disorder is certain to come with any mass civil disobedience campaign. Even

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the railways will hardly escape strikes, wrecks, sabotage of many sorts.

The Japanese would be sure to intensify their propaganda and to send "agents provocateurs" to create discussion among Indians (Hindus and Muslims) and to provoke violent action by British and American troops against the mass civil disobedience groups. Fifth columnists in the country, such as the followers of Bose and others who are likely to be associated with the Axis-sponsored India convention now being held in Bangkok, will try to take full advantage of the situation.

An American Force in Such Circumstances.

In case Gandhi should launch mass civil disobedience against Britain, an American force in India would also suffer. Its position might be relieved by the following means:

- (1) Deposit supplies in such places and quantities as not to be dependent upon railroads.
- (2) Avoid identification with the British politically, that is, keep out of the political quarrel. Instead, try to capitalize on Indian goodwill toward America, to keep the boycott from applying to our forces.
- (3) Be prepared to act firmly in case of demonstrations that might affect the health, comfort, or even operations of our troops. Indians might lie down on the road before war transport vehicles or on airplane runways, or might

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stand in the way of marching troops. It is important, however, to remember that the Indian demonstrators will be vowed not to use violence. American troops, therefore, should refrain as long as humanly possible from any violence against the Indians. They should employ methods like those of our troops at home when used to control the civil population in times of flood or other emergencies. They must beware of "agents provocateurs" among the Indians, supported by the Japanese.

(4) Get all possible support from Rajagopalachariar, who has bolted from the Congress and is the most influential Hindu in India, after Gandhi and Nehru. Also, Americans should try to win the support of students, who in this generation, under the Japanese threat, may be less susceptible to Gandhi's influence than they were in 1920 and 1930. Other sources of support may be the labor organizations, including the left-wingers.

(5) Indians should be used as leaders to meet demonstrations by Indians and to dissuade the civil resisters. These Indians should be drawn from all Indian groups, Muslim as well as Hindus, non-Congress members as well as Congress members.

(6) Try to keep American troops, as far as possible, from contact with civil disobedience demonstrations. The most affected areas would probably be Bombay, Gujarat, United Provinces, Bihar, Bengal around Calcutta.

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(7) Have plans laid in advance to handle any incidents that might unfortunately occur. We should make immediate announcement of regret, no matter who was responsible, state number of casualties (to forestall rumors), institute an investigation.

It is not certain that Gandhi will be able to get the Indian National Congress to adopt mass civil disobedience. A news story of June 16 (published June 17) tells of conferences between Gandhi, Nehru and Asad, who are said to be disagreeing on the question of whether to oppose Britain now or after the Japanese menace has passed. It is not impossible that Gandhi, following his practice in more or less analogous circumstances in the past, might engage upon a "fast to death" to compel recalcitrant members of the Congress to his will. If the one fasting dies in such circumstances, Hindus believe that guilt falls upon the person whose injustice led the injured person to undertake the fast. Such a fast by Gandhi has always stirred India profoundly in the past and been successful, and one might be successful now.

The best way to prevent mass civil disobedience at present would be to bring Britain and India to an agreement. Britain is at present following a "wait and see" policy concerning India, but military necessity demands a positive policy. If no such agreement is reached, civil disobedience is likely

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to occur; and if it does, American troops must be prepared to meet it in the most intelligent possible manner.

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SUPPLEMENT

This supplement has been requested as an amplification of the remarks concerning the effectiveness of civil disobedience in India in 1920-22 and 1930-32.

Mass civil disobedience gets its power in India from the following popular beliefs, all of great age in Hinduism and accepted by Hindus as axioms:

(1) Physical violence is always wrong. The highest ethic is to do no injury to any living creature.

(2) Persistent adherence to a just cause, if the adherence is not accompanied by any injustice or untruth such as violence, produces a metaphysical force which brings success.

(3) The death of a person rightfully pursuing a true cause does not harm that person--he will be reborn to a better state--but is a sin to be debited to the account of the person or persons causing his death and refusing redress of his just grievance.

These beliefs, though generally accepted, are by no means always honored in practice, any more than the admonition to turn the other cheek is honored by Christians. But their hold is sufficiently strong to furnish sanctions for non-violent mass civil disobedience.

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In the civil disobedience campaigns conducted in India non-violence has been interspersed with violence. Sometimes the civil resisters have themselves initiated the violence. At other times the police or military authorities have resorted to violence, and this violence has sometimes in its turn inspired a violent reaction from the resisters. On still other occasions, civil disobedience demonstrations have led to disturbances between Hindu and Muslim which have been accompanied by violence. In a few cases industrial disputes have become involved with civil disobedience, and violence has followed. Both non-violent and violent civil disobedience have been embarrassing to the governmental authorities, though the violent variety has been easier to handle, and each would be damaging to the military situation in India now.

When mass civil disobedience has taken place in India, demonstrations have been made in every part of the country. The program in the past has been against the administrative system and the sale of British manufactures. The boycott of British goods was conducted with vigorous and widespread propaganda, the picketing of shops selling such goods, and the promotion of Indian manufactured or handicraft substitutes, particularly textiles.

The degree of success attending these campaigns may be gauged from such a statement as that made by Sir George Lloyd, Governor of Bombay at the time of the first non-cooperation

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movement (1920-22) when civil disobedience was first tried in India, "Gandhi's was the most colossal experiment in world history; and it came within an inch of succeeding." The Government of India spokesman, Mr. L. F. Rushbrook Williams, writing in the government publication India in 1922-23, pp. 286 ff., said, "Racial feeling increased to such a degree that the position of Government officials--particularly British officials--became in certain localities almost unbearable... As the year (1921) drew to a close the non-cooperators girded up their loins for a final effort...The activities of the party redoubled. The number of Khilafat and Congress meetings rose to unprecedented heights, and a steady stream of inflammatory oratory was poured forth...On the day when His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales landed, serious rioting broke out. In Bombay, the disorders lasted for nearly three days, as a result of which the total casualty list amounted to 53 killed and approximately 400 wounded. Throughout Calcutta and the principal towns of northern India, there was a general cessation of business, produced in the majority of cases by undisguised and open intimidation on the part of National Volunteers. The terrorism practiced by these bodies was widespread, organized and simultaneous."

The relatively non-violent phase of the campaign is illustrated by an account in India in 1930-31 of what occurred

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in Bombay:

"As in other parts of India, the chief feature of the earlier stages of the Civil Disobedience Movement in Bombay was the illicit manufacture of salt. This was frequently done in ceremonial fashion by prominent members of the Congress on the Esplanade Maidan. The operation consisted of boiling sea water in a receptacle over a fire,—the performer with a few attendants being surrounded by concentric rings of Congress volunteers with tightly linked arms, the rings numbering not infrequently from six to twelve. On one occasion no less than thirty rings were used, three of which consisted of Sikhs and three of women. For the police to break through these rings of volunteers without inflicting injuries was an extremely prolonged and exasperating task, and when,—as was usually the case,—they had succeeded in doing so the crowd more often than not became violent and pelted them with stones.

"Breaches of the Salt Law on a far more extensive scale were later organized at the Wadala Salt pans in the Northern part of the Island. Thousands of Congress supporters supplemented by sightseers streamed out of Bombay by tram, train and motor lorry, and advanced in masses on the three mile front covering the salt pans. It was impossible to supply sufficient police to protect this front from raiders trying to remove salt from the pans; moreover at the outset the police had orders to use only the absolute minimum of force. Subsequently to deal with the increasingly serious situation that was developing, the assistance of the military was obtained,—though the brunt of the work still fell on the police, who were gradually compelled to use more force. Lathis were freely employed, but even this did not prevent a considerable amount of salt being stolen. During the course of the Wadala raids the police had to be kept on duty all day without relief from early morning, in the burning sun, and most of their time was taken up in the strenuous task of chasing raiders away from the pans. The arrival of the monsoon put an end to this form of Congress activity, but attention was then diverted to picketing foreign cloth shops. At the start, picketers actively prevented customers from entering shops in the Fort area, and the police were called in to arrest and remove them; but no sooner had one batch been removed, when another took its place. Vast crowds of course collected to watch the proceedings, with the result that traffic became impossible, turmoil and confusion arose, and the police, in the end, were attacked. This phase of picketing in the Fort died down after a while, but was replaced by intensive picketing of

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cloth shops in the native city. While this was in progress, any merchant who wished to remove bales of foreign cloth from a warehouse could only do so at considerable personal risk; and on many occasions the police had to escort lorry loads of foreign cloth through the city. This was always a troublesome matter, as Congress volunteers were in the habit of laying themselves prostrate in front of the lorry before it started, or else the tyres of the vehicle, if pneumatic, would be punctured, and frequently great difficulty was experienced in getting the convey to its destination in a safer part of the city. On two or three occasions volunteers marked down the warehouse from which bales of cloth had been taken, and at the earliest opportunity broke into it and set fire to the goods that remained.

"Throughout the whole of this time hardly a day passed without some meeting being held, a huge procession being led through the streets, a disturbance created outside one of the Magistrates' Courts while trials of volunteers were in progress, or lorry-loads of enthusiasts careering through the streets shouting Congress slogans. By these and other means excitement was maintained at fever heat by the Congress for two or three months, and the city was kept in a continual state of pandemonium. The police were the sole visible sign of Government authority in the city and as such were the targets for every kind of vituperation and ridicule.

"It has been estimated by some well informed observers that from a very early stage of the proceedings about 20 per cent. of the population of the city were actually Congress workers or sympathizers, and 70 per cent. more were for one reason or another hostile to the police. Of the remainder, excluding most Government servants, the majority were content to look on and laugh. The position of the police, therefore, was extremely unenviable. Actually, neither the breaches of the Salt Law, nor the picketing of cloth shops, troublesome though they proved, were nearly so dangerous as the organized mass demonstrations. In the first few months, these demonstrations were of almost daily occurrence. Gigantic yelling processions passed through the main thoroughfares of the city; volunteers seized or attempted to seize the functions of the traffic duty constables; policemen were insulted and held up to ridicule in every possible way. At Congress House and at the Courts, there were innumerable instances in which it was only the steadiness of the sepoys in the front rank that prevented the most serious outbreak of disorder, which would probably have resulted in the police being overwhelmed. On

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one particular occasion a crowd of close on 50,000, yelling, angry, and out for mischief, was held up by a force of 200 unarmed police; the presence in the background of a small armed force was quite insufficient as a deterrent, and a sign of weakness on the part of any one of the unarmed constables would in all probability have turned Bombay into a Sholapur. The situation was saved because the mob hesitated to attack a disciplined, if minute, body of men, who showed no sign of fear. There is no doubt that these gigantic demonstrations were primarily intended to overawe the police, and when it was clear that they could not do so the most dangerous phase of the Movement was at an end." (India in 1930-31, pp. 660-61.)

In the campaign of 1920-22, violence was relatively rare, and when a Congress party group killed a number of policemen at Chauri Chaura, Gandhi suspended the campaign. In 1930-32 violent disorders were much more frequent. In the Government of India publication India in 1930-31 (pages 69-70) there is a list of disorders occurring between April 6 and July 7, 1930, as follows:

"Such outbreaks of violence as this country has suffered in recent times have been due mainly to communal hostility or labour disputes, and neither of these causes,--as we shall indicate in a moment,--was responsible for much trouble during the earlier part of 1930-31. Unquestionably, the vast majority of the disorders were attributable to the general excitement created by the Civil Disobedience Movement or to some special incident connected with it. In the space at our disposal here we cannot attempt to describe these riots individually, but the following list, which is not an exhaustive one, will give some indication of the extent and nature of the difficulties the authorities had to contend with. On the 11th of April there were disturbances in Bombay and Calcutta; on the 14th, a riot in Belgaum (Bombay); on the 15th, a serious riot in Calcutta; on the 16th, another serious riot in Karachi, and a disturbance in Poona. On the 18th occurred the startling attack by terrorists on the Armouries in Chittagong, which will be described in Chapter IX. On the 20th there was a disturbance in Patna; on the 22nd a riot in Madras; and the 23rd was the date of the very serious riots in Peshawar which have already been referred to in

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Chapter I. On the 27th a second riot occurred in Madras; on the 2nd of May there was a disturbance in Amritsar; and on the 6th, serious riots in Delhi and Calcutta, and disturbances in Bombay, Ranaghat (Bengal), and Jullunder (Punjab). On the 8th, rioting of so exceptionally serious a kind occurred in Sholapur that martial law had to be proclaimed. On the 15th/17th there were serious riots in Mysensingh (Bengal); on the 17th, a disturbance in the Jhelum District; on the 24th, disturbances in Calcutta, Karachi, and Multan (Punjab); on the 25th, a riot near Mardan (Frontier Province) in which a police officer was killed, and disturbances in Delhi and Rawalpindi; and on the 25th/26th a serious riot in Lucknow. Bombay was the scene of a riot on the 26th/27th; on the 29th there was a disturbance in Calcutta, and on the 31st a second riot in Peshawar. In June, a disturbance occurred in Dera Ismail Khan (Frontier Province) and at Cholingamallur (Madras) on the 2nd; and serious riots occurred in and around Midnapore (Bengal) on the 3rd/7th. Bombay suffered further disturbances on the 5th, 12th, 16th, and 21st. There were riots near Kaira (Bombay) and in Vellore (Madras) on the 8th; and disturbances in Amritsar on the 9th, in Panchla (Bengal) on the 10th, in Kherai (Bengal) on the 13th, in Calcutta on the 21st, and in Tangail (Bengal) on the 25th. On the 26th, a riot occurred in Ellore (Madras), and on the 30th a disturbance near Bhagalpur (Bengal). During the first week in July there were disturbances in Jessore (Bengal) on the 1st, in Bombay on the 3rd, and in Poona on the 6th. A riot took place near Balasore (Bengal) on the 1st/2nd. Practically every one of these disorders occurred as a result of some incident connected with the Civil Disobedience Movement. There were also some serious affrays resulting from communal hostility or labour disputes. Among the former may be mentioned the riots in Digboi (Assam) on the 9th of May, near Muttra (United Provinces) on the 30th, and in Dabkali (Bombay) on the 9th of June; and the very savage fighting which broke out in Dacca on the 24th of May and continued sporadically for the next ten days. Among the graver disturbances arising out of industrial disputes was the carters' riot in Calcutta on the 1st of April, the riot in Bombay five days later in connection with the strike on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, and the extraordinary outbreak of mob violence in Rangoon on the 26th/27th of May, as a result of rivalry between Burman and Indian dock-labourers, which will be described in detail in Chapter IX. In addition to all this, several outrages occurred which were directly attributable to terrorists, and also a number of minor bomb-explosions and other incidents which demonstrated how large a proportion of the population was now desirous of imitating terrorist methods. Reference has already been made to the

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extraordinary outrage at Chittagong on the 18th of April. Among the other incidents during this month were two bomb explosions in Bombay on the 12th and a murderous attack on the police at Feni railway station (Bengal) on the 22nd. On the 3rd of May there was an explosion in Kirkee (Bombay); on the 16th, a bomb was thrown at the police in Howrah, and similar outrages occurred in Madras and in Multan on the 19th; on the 24th and 27th respectively two trains were derailed, the one between Maitha and Bhanpur on the East Indian Railway, and the other near Campore. In June, on the 4th, there was a bomb explosion in Lahore, another in the Chenab Club, Lyallpur, on the 6th, and yet another at Barisal (Bengal) on the 18th. On the 19th, a series of carefully prepared bomb explosions occurred in six towns in the Punjab, namely Amritsar, Gujranwala, Lahore, Lyallpur, Rawalpindi, and Sheikhupura. An explosion occurred in New Delhi on the 21st, on the 2nd of July there was an attempt to derail the Calcutta mail near Peshawar, and a bomb burst in Old Delhi on the 4th."

The "attack by terrorists on the Armouries in Chittagong" is described in the same book as follows:

"Among the numerous outrages which they perpetrated the most spectacular and daring was the raid on the Armouries at Chittagong on the 18th of April, which must be described in some detail. At about 10 p.m. on that day, four batches of terrorists set out from the Congress Office and Ganesh Ghosh's shop, one to capture the Police Armoury, one to capture the Auxiliary Force Armoury, one to massacre Europeans in the Club, and the fourth to destroy the Telephone Exchange and Telegraph Office. The Club party, however, on finding the place practically deserted, soon split up and joined the two Armoury parties. The Police Armoury party consisted of about 50 youths. All were dressed in khaki and the leaders wore officer's uniforms. On reaching the Armoury, the leaders rushed the sentry and shot him down. The remainder followed, broke open the Armoury and Magazine, and armed themselves with muskets and revolvers with which they drove out the unarmed constables from the police lines. The Auxiliary Force Armoury party consisted of about seven persons. The leader, dressed as an officer, walked up to the sentry and after replying to his challenge, shot him and another sepoy fatally. Sergeant-Major Farrell, on coming out of his quarters nearby, was shot dead. The Armoury was then forced open and pistols, revolvers, rifles and a Lewis gun were taken away. The ammunition, which was in

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the magazine, was fortunately overlooked. The building was then set on fire with petrol, and the raiders, after loading their cars with arms, drove to the police lines to join the other party. While in possession of the Armoury they fired on all motor cars passing on the road, killing a railway guard, the driver and assistant driver of a taxi, and a constable who was in the District Magistrate's car. This party therefore murdered seven persons altogether, and in addition wounded two others. The Telegraph Office party consisted of about six persons. They seized the telephone operator and chloroformed him, hacked the telephone board to pieces, and set it on fire. The telegraph master was shot at when he came to the operator's assistance, but he returned with a gun and drove them off without their having succeeded in destroying the Telegraph Office. They then went to the police lines and joined the main party. The number of raiders at the police lines now amounted to about 60. Having armed themselves with muskets they were being instructed in using them. At about midnight, however, Mr. Farmer, Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Johnson, Superintendent of Police, Mr. Lewis, Assistant Superintendent of Police, and Mr. Barraclough, a member of the Auxiliary Force, opened fire on them with a Lewis gun, secured from a subsidiary armoury. The raiders returned the fire and also threw a bomb which failed to explode. Himongshu Sen, one of the raiders, while setting the guard-room on fire with petrol, got so severely burnt that he subsequently died. Two of the leaders and two others took Himongshu Sen away in a motor car, abandoning the rest of the party, who thereupon retreated to the hills North of the town, each carrying a musket, at least one revolver or pistol and a haversack of cartridges. Nineteen of the raiders were shot dead during the skirmishes which subsequently took place when the police attempted to round them up. During one of these skirmishes Constable Prasanna Barua displaying magnificent courage and tenacity in seizing and clinging to one of the raiders although mortally wounded. Meanwhile another batch of terrorists had destroyed railway and telegraphic wires at Dhoom, 40 miles from Chittagong, and another had cut the telegraph wires and made an unsuccessful attempt to derail a train near Laksan, 70 miles away."

The "riots in Peshawar" are described as follows:

"In the second week of April, a visit which a committee of Congressmen proposed to make to the Province, between the 18th and 21st, to enquire into the working of the Frontier Crimes Regulation, was successfully used as a means of accentuating the excitement which already prevailed. A group of local leaders,

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Abdul Ghaffar Khan being the most conspicuous among them, had organized beforehand a series of tours in the Districts to explain the intentions of the committee and collect subscriptions and material for it. On the 20th, an official order was issued prohibiting the committee from entering the Province. This was seized upon as yet another excuse for vilifying the Government, and passions in the Peshawar bazaars were so aroused that the local leaders decided that it would be worth while staging a mass demonstration to defy the authorities a few days later. The date selected was the 23rd. Meanwhile the speeches made, and the pamphlets distributed, had become so violent in tone that it was decided that the most conspicuous agitators must be arrested, and on the morning of the 23rd orders were issued that the chief Congress workers in the city,--Syed Lal Badshah, Ali Gul Khan and Paira Khan,--together with Rahim Bakhsh Ghasnavi, some members of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha,--or Youth League,--and the editors of certain newspapers, should be taken into custody.

"While the arrests were being made an angry crowd had been gathering in the Kissa Khani Bazaar, apparently with the object of rescuing some of the prisoners from the police. The temper and size of the mob soon became so alarming that the Deputy Commissioner considered it advisable to call in the City Disturbance Column. Meanwhile, rioting had already broken out,--of the singularly savage type which is inevitable in a place like Peshawar, where so large a proportion of the populace is accustomed to acts of violence. On advancing into the scene of the disturbance, the troops were received with a hail of stones and bricks. A British despatch rider accompanying the Column was thrown from his motor bicycle and murdered by the mob, and one of the armoured cars was set on fire. By this time it was obvious that to get control of the situation by peaceful means was quite impossible, and fire was therefore opened by the troops. The state of affairs improved after a further detachment of troops had appeared on the scene, and by the afternoon authority had been more or less restored. The total number of rioters killed is believed to have been 20. In the course of the riots the Deputy Commissioner was hit in the face by a brick and rendered unconscious, and an Assistant Superintendent of Police was badly injured.

"During the next day the city was fairly quiet, though the shops remained closed. But in the evening, when it was reported that two platoons of the 2/18th Royal Garhwal Rifles had refused to obey orders, the Chief Commissioner decided, after conferring with some of the leading men of the city, that it was advisable that all troops should be withdrawn to cantonments. Thereafter the situation rapidly deteriorated. Congress

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volunteers were enrolled in large numbers, and the work of the police was soon rendered almost impossible. A memorial to those who had lost their lives in the riots was erected in Kissa Khani Bazaar, and every possible means were adopted by the local Congress leaders for maintaining the populace in a state of violent animosity against the authorities. For several days the whole city was practically in the control of the Congressmen, and it became necessary to re-occupy it with troops. This operation was carried out without untoward incident in the early morning of the 4th of May. Some Congress leaders and a number of hooligans were then arrested, and the headquarters of the Congress Committee were searched. From this date onwards the situation steadily improved until the morning of the 31st, when there occurred a peculiarly unfortunate incident which has already been mentioned in Chapter I. Owing to the accidental discharge of his rifle by a British soldier, a Sikh lady, who was passing in a tonga at the time, was wounded, and both her children killed. This tragedy was responsible for a minor outbreak of rioting during the afternoon. Subsequently, however, no further disturbances occurred in Peshawar city itself during the period under review,--though the state of affairs was often extremely tense."

It is evident that disorders were widespread, dangerous, and difficult to control.